WINCHESTER NEWS
A TRUSTED AND RELIABLE SOURCE OF LOCAL NEWS

Donate

DONATE | NEWS | SPORTS | EVENTS | FEATURES | OPINION | NEWSLETTER | CONTACT | ABOUT

HELPERS AMONG US

Helpers Among Us — Marianne DiBlasi is jack-of-all-trades volunteer

JOYCE WESTNER | STAFF WRITER

August 16, 2024 . 6:00 AM — 3 min read

Christine McKenna chats with Marianne DiBlasi at the farmers market. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/JOYCE WESTNER

On a bright Saturday morning, Conant Road resident Marianne D
scooting around the farmers market, chatting with vendors and c

Subscribe

alike. As president of the Farmers Market Community Hub, DiBlasi makes it her business to find out how the market is doing, and buying herself some of the goods (she's enthusiastic about the empanadas).

"Marianne is the premier spokesperson for the market," says manager Fred Yen. "She finds a need in the community and fulfills it."

She also helps the community in other ways, both as a paid professional, and as a volunteer, and this Saturday she eagerly talks about a new effort, the Solo Agers Network, a group she founded recently to assist elders without a strong local support system.

The Jenks Center is hosting Solo Agers programs. COURTESY PHOTO/THE JENKS CENTER

DiBlasi approached the Jenks Center and they ran a meeting about the legal issues facing singletons as they age.

"The room was packed — 76 people came," she says.

And thus it turned into a network, not just a presentation.

Back in 2008, DiBlasi's mother was diagnosed with a neurodegenerative illness, and DiBlasi became her care manager for the next seven years.

"I earned my 'Mom Master's Degree' — I had to find services that would let her stay in her home, and then find her an assisted living with a memory care unit," she says. "Finally, she needed skilled nursing and hos

Subscribe

“I was born with a physical disability, spina bifida,” she adds. “Along with supporting, living with a disability contributes to my keen awareness of needing to plan for the future.”

Check out our new events calendar by clicking the calendar tab on our landing page menu bar! Or click here

Her network plans to have monthly talks in the fall, and DiBlasi sent information to other communities’ councils on aging.

“We believe in widening the welcome,” she says.

On Sept. 17, there is a talk by the founder of “Health Assist,” a business that helps clients navigate the health care system.

In October, a geriatrician will discuss “self-centered care” about taking care of oneself and how to communicate needs and wishes to providers. November brings an elder care attorney to explain health care proxies and powers of attorney.

“Without the Jenks support staff,” says DiBlasi, “we couldn’t do this.”

And she offers a shout-out to the Jenks social worker, Suzanne Norton.

Another volunteer job for DiBlasi has been with the Mystic River Watershed Association’s Path Improvement Project concerned with safety and accessibility.

“We sent our recommendations to the state’s Department of Conservation and Recreation, and now we wait,” she says.

Subscribe

Mystic River Watershed Association's Path Improvement Project is concerned with safety and accessibility and is something Marianne DiBlasi is interested in. COURTESY PHOTO/MYSTIC RIVER WATERSHED ASSOC.

An outspoken advocate of green burials, DiBlasi gives talks as part of the Green Burial Massachusetts group which promotes burials without embalming, metal caskets, or cement vaults. She's been attending some meetings of the town's Wildwood Cemetery Advisory Committee, which is in favor of setting aside a portion of the graveyard for green burials.

But DiBlasi's day jobs are about caring too. Since 2011, she's been the editor of the quarterly Disabilities Issues Newsletter, a free publication that addresses the challenges facing people who live with disabilities, and she's an advocate for them as well.

Plus she's the Winchester Unitarian Church's summer minister, helping to organize members to run Sunday services, and lending assistance to their pastoral care group.

"Marianne is a joyful woman who has helped us when our pastor was away," says Donna Reed. "She knows about local services that are available and she's good company!"

Subscribe

Winchester News is a non-profit organization supported by our community. If you appreciate having local Winchester news, please donate to support our work, and subscribe to our free weekly newsletter.

Related

HELPERS AMONG US

Helpers Among Us - WinPAC unites with light

On a cold and blustery day, two post-graduate Winchester High School students and others stood outside the Stop & Shop inviting folks to buy luminary kits as part of the Unite with Light event planned for Sunday, Dec. 14. The successful program was started by Mairin Norton, a high-schooler who

JOYCE WESTNER | STAFF WRITER
November 27, 2025

HELPERS AMONG US

Helpers Among Us - Alisa Dong needs your help with Thanksgiving food drive

Standish Lane resident Alisa Dong has only lived in town for about four years, but she's already immersed in helping people. And she wants residents to help her provide Thanksgiving Day meals for local food-insecure residents. A member of the town's Family Action Network (FAN), Dong is its

JOYCE WESTNER | STAFF WRITER
November 18, 2025

Subscribe

HELPERS AMONG US

Helpers Among Us — Coaches volunteer to bring on the cheer

You probably know that cheerleaders appear at sporting events to cheer on their teams, but you might not know that cheerleading is a sport in its own right. Or that Winchester Cheer coaches volunteer to help girls and boys learn and compete in cheerleading. Middlesex Street resident Erin Black is

JOYCE WESTNER | STAFF WRITER

November 14, 2025

HELPERS AMONG US

Helpers Among Us - Patti Reilly wants your children's clothes

Although Patti Reilly opened her boutique, Jules, about a year and a half ago, she's already discovered the generosity of Winchester residents. That's why she and her husband, John, decided to offer a 10% discount on one item to anyone who brings in "gently used children's clothing.

JOYCE WESTNER | STAFF WRITER

November 10, 2025

Latest

PROMOTING HEALTH & EMPOWERMENT
HEAR FROM HIGH SCHOOL LEADERS
LEARN THROUGH INTERACTIVE GAMES
MEET NEW PEOPLE
FREE AND OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY
Middle school & high school students, teachers, parents, friends, community members - come and bring a friend!
FOR MORE INFORMATION:
EMAIL OFFICE@NFSJ.ORG
CALL 781-729-7100
NETWORK for SOCIAL JUSTICE
FROM WINCHESTER AND CHELSEA
GIRL UP
WOMEN IN STEM
GIRLS GOTTA RUN
MIND & MATTER

EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

NEWS

Winchester School C candidates bring con backgrounds to Thursday forum

Subscribe

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

March 4, 2026

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

Subscribe

WINCHESTER NEWS
A TRUSTED AND RELIABLE SOURCE OF LOCAL NEWS

Subscribe to Winchester News

© 2026 Winchester News Group, Inc. Copying and sharing with permission for non-commercial use only.

Subscribe